

VIETNAM
F-JEZEDEL
CLEAR FOR TAKE-OFF

© 2014, by Don Poss
366th Security Police Squadron, K-9
1965-1966



Đà Nẵng Air Base, Ammo Dump, 1965-1966: In SEA, Jezebel Butterflies hatch only once a year. Composite Graphic © 2014 by Don Poss.

Jezebel

Đà Nẵng Air Base, ammo dump.

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Blackie and I were sweeping a K-9 ammo bunkers post and checking heavy brush on the north end. The howitzers and aircraft action was at a lull as the hot day had begun to cool.

Blackie padded along sniffing the air and pausing now and then to scan the area. As we approached the N/W corner of the area, not within raised mounds of dirt barriers, Blackie began twisting his head curiously and looking up. He did this now and then when strings of flares were airborne nearby, which was not the case as it was still daylight.

Blackie started huffing and fluffing his cheeks, uncertain that whatever the *whatever* was merited a total silence to gain my full attention. Heavy foliage bumped up against a flat-wire perimeter fence, patterned like a volley ball net, that stair-stepped up and down through a dry stream bed nearby. At first I thought some Vietnamese workers might still be clearing brush as they had been a week earlier... but the hour was too late for that.

Them I saw them....

A fluttering spiral of tan and yellow butterflies swirled by the thousands, rising-coiling upward through trees and brush -- a tsunami of golden flutter from an island-like patch of green sprinkled with small sunflowers and white petal flowers -- *all in total silence*. Dozens of butterflies awaited their instinctive signal to take wing, seesawing on flower petals in a gentle breeze. Finally they too winged away playing yo-yo tag like the tail of a dragon kite, to wherever butterflies fly.

Blackie wagged his tail gleefully, and I would have if I had one -- *butterflies in Vietnam -- who would'a think it :*).

For several moments in August 1965, Blackie and I had marveled at the totally unexpected flash of fluttering colors oblivious to the

fields of war they had alighted from. At age twenty, the captivating sight formed a *memory of time* that remained untold -- *I wasn't sure if real men should like butterflies or not.*

As dusk morphed into a new-moon and rare quiet night, Blackie and I continued our patrolling of the ammo bunkers. Although howitzers and aircraft action remained at a lull, an ever-present string of flares ringed the Air Base and lite the ammo dump bunkers in amber hues and Frankensien-shadows of dancing fence-posts, that kept me saucer-eyed until dawn.

I had thought they were Monarch Butterflies; years later I learned they were likely named Jezebel Butterflies, common in SEA.

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